

Stephanie A Strength
Environmental Protection Specialist/RD
1400 Independence Ave SW Room # 2244
Washington, DC 20250-1571

July 13th, 2009

Dear Stephanie A Strength

I am writing you as a concerned citizen against CAPX2020 a 1.7 billion dollar high tower power transmission line that big energy companies are trying to force upon Minnesotans. Please do what you can to oppose this effort:

- I-162-001 | 1. Updated forecasts of electric peak demand do not support the need for the CapX2020 ultra high voltage power line projects, including the La Crosse Project;
- I-162-005 | 2. The CapX2020 La Crosse ultra high voltage power line will cause environmental harm — including visual impacts in scenic corridors, health risks due to electro-magnetic fields, decline in property values, loss of prime agricultural land, risks to rare and endangered species, fragmentation of habitat in a national wildlife refuge, and bird mortality along the Mississippi Flyway.
- I-162-002 | 3. The La Crosse Project should be considered with other CapX2020 power lines which create the potential for transmission of coal power east from the Dakotas to load centers east of Minnesota. The environmental consequences of coal and coal pollution due to the La Crosse line result in additional adverse impacts of the project.
- I-162-003 | 4. Conservation, local generation and local transmission can solve any local reliability issues at a much lower cost to ratepayers without damaging the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge, Scenic Byways and other protected natural resources that would be impaired by the La Crosse Project and without providing transmission from distant coal plants;
- I-162-006 | 5. Taxpayers should not finance any portion of the CapX2020 La Crosse Project through the USDA Rural Utilities Service.

On a personal note, I have had the pleasure of hunting and fishing in SE Minnesota. The beauty in SE Minnesota is unmatched in the state. I also know many fine taxpaying citizens who live or have retired to this area. One I know in particular has the proposed power line cutting his beautiful farm in half, with the power line proposed over his home! This farm has been confirmed by the MN DNR to have rare endangered plants. What a shame if this fact is ignored! The cost of this project is not worth the destruction of such a beautiful area. If it must be built, which I question its necessity; it should follow already established corridors and highways.

Sincerely,

Janine Holter
610 Nelson Blvd
Montrose MN

I-162-001

Your comment has been noted. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will describe, in detail, project purpose and need. The justification document which has been accepted by the RUS is the Alternative Evaluation study which is available at:
<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be available on the RUS website at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be solicited after its publication.

I-162-002

Your comment has been noted. Due to the transmission grid's interconnected nature as well as to electricity's nature - it's generally difficult to identify a specific source of electricity on the grid.

While the CapX2020 projects involve four independent projects being developed in a similar time frame with some of the same of utilities participating, the Purpose and Need for the CapX2020 Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345-kV Project was developed and proven independently of the other CapX2020 projects. The Alternative Evaluation Study addresses project Purpose and Need. It is available at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>, which has been approved by the RUS.

The proposed CapX2020 transmission lines will serve the region's expected growth and help begin to meet Minnesota's Renewable Energy Standard (RES), which requires utilities to deliver 25 percent of their electricity from renewable sources by 2025 (Xcel Energy is mandated to deliver 30 percent by 2020, with 25 percent from wind). Most of that energy comes from wind turbines.

I-162-003

Your comment has been noted. Alternatives to the project will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

I-162-004

Your comment has been noted. The criteria used to route the transmission line is described in the Macro Corridor Study which is available on the RUS website at:
<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. These criteria and routing process will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The project is still in the development and planning stages and the utilities have not yet permitted a route for the transmission line.

I-162-005

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts to the aesthetic quality of the areas surrounding the transmission line, health and safety, socioeconomic resources, agriculture, wildlife, and vegetation will all be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

I-162-006

Your comment has been noted. Dairyland Power Cooperative, one of the CapX2020 utilities, has requested financial assistance from USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS), for Dairyland's anticipated 11 percent ownership interest in the proposed Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345 kilovolt transmission line project. RUS has determined that its funding of Dairyland's ownership interest is a federal action and therefore subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). RUS is the lead agency for both NEPA and Section 106 review.